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Wednesday, 4 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Obadi (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/50/444/Add.3)

The Acting President: I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to document A/50/444/Add.3.

In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs me that since the issuance of his communications dated 19 and 22 September and 2 October 1995, Niger has made the necessary payments to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The Acting President: The first speaker is the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Alhaji Mr. Alusine Fofanah, and I now call on him.

Mr. Fofanah (Sierra Leone): Permit me, first of all, to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. Indeed, as we commemorate 50 years of the existence of our Organization, his unanimous election to preside over this Assembly is a fitting tribute to his country and an eloquent testimony to his personal experience and skills as a seasoned diplomat. I therefore want to assure him of my delegation's fullest cooperation as he directs and guides our deliberations on this historic occasion, and to wish him every success in that endeavour.

To his immediate predecessor, and our esteemed Brother, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, I convey my delegation's gratitude and appreciation for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the affairs of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to thank our eminent Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his bold initiatives and his firm guidance of the work of the Organization.

The world has come a long way from 26 June 1945, when 50 States appended their signatures to the Charter document, creating this enduring body. In spite of the undoubted advancement of science and technology, and

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indeed the enormous strides made by the Organization during the past 50 years, the world continues, alas, to be gripped by the same age-old problems of poverty, disarmament, maintenance of peace and security, development and many more.

Certainly, on the economic front there is no cause for comfort or complacency. Most developing countries, especially the least developed, continue to be strangled by negative economic trends, stagnating resource flows, seemingly unstoppable reductions in export earnings, rising unemployment and, above all, the phenomenal increase in the number of peopie living in absolute poverty, occasioned largely by wars, famine, drought and the heavy burden of foreign debts.

The debt burden, in particular, continues to be excessive and harmful to the sustainable development of developing countries, especially the least developed among them. In this connection, the initiative of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer earlier this year to put in place measures to help reduce the stock of multilateral debt of the most indebted developing nations is a step in the right direction. Nevertheless, we continue to hold the view that unless the debt issue is seriously addressed by the international community, no meaningful progress for the next 50 years can be accomplished in the foreseeable future by the developing countries, especially the least developed among them.

We believe that a permanent and definitive comprehensive solution to the debt problem must be found without further delay. That is why we commend the current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, His Excellency President Soeharto of Indonesia, for his initiative in convening in August last year a Ministerial Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries on the subject of debt and development with the theme "Sharing of Experiences", at which a number of general principles for debt reduction were adopted, marking significant progress in the search for a lasting solution to this nagging problem.

We continue to appeal to the international community, particularly to the international financial institutions, to give those modest recommendations serious consideration in the formulation of policies and actions on the debt issue.

The persistence of these problems has undermined political stability and threatened regional and international peace and security. Determined as we in the developing countries have been to improve the lot of our people and to redress the economic plight facing our various countries, we still labour under excruciating circumstances. It is now abundantly clear that the developing countries cannot go it alone. We need the involvement of other, dependable, partners, particularly among the developed countries and the major international financial institutions. Additional resources at multilateral and bilateral levels are essential from these partners to achieve rapid improvement in the lives of the millions of our affected people.

As for Sierra Leone, since April 1992, when the National Provisional Ruling Council took over the reins of government, we have set for ourselves the task of implementing anti-poverty programmes and socio-economic reforms, including deregulation of prices, exchange control and interest rates, and the reduction of fiscal deficit.

Despite the limited scope of the success attained so far, we are determined not to relent in our efforts to cater for the special needs of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Calling upon the international community to pay special attention to the problems of developing countries by providing them with financial and technical support should not be considered as an appeal simply for charity but rather an investment in the future development and well-being of mankind. Indeed, we realize that the key to sustainable development in any State is in the hands of its citizenry. Developing countries are now very much aware of this and are taking responsibility for working towards improving the lot of the peoples of their respective countries.

Indeed, during the 50 years of its existence, the United Nations has also been studying ways and means of improving the economies of the developing countries of the world. None the less, as our export prices have been on the decline, our economic plans have remained unfulfilled and the rate of growth of our gross domestic product, which was never fast, is in great danger of slowing down to a complete standstill. The technical assistance schemes which have been formulated to study the problem are numerous. My delegation firmly believes that the time has now come for positive action that would lead to the eradication of the largely known causes of economic stagnation, particularly in Africa. We call for a speedy implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s as well as for the consolidation of efforts towards the diversification of the African economies.

In a world of growing interdependence, the liberalization of trade, the globalization of the economy and increasing regional integration, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty cannot be ensured in the absence of peace and stability. "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" not only show that peace and development are inseparable and indivisible but rather that they contain the essential ingredients of a new vision of our one world. No development is possible anywhere, save in an environment that is peaceful, stable and secure. This holds true for national development, as it does for regional and international cooperation. That is why we in Sierra Leone have always believed that peace at home is incomplete unless our neighbours enjoy peace too. Today, more than ever before, we should all be aware that we are our brother's keeper and that we can no longer afford to be indifferent to developments in any part of the globe.

Three years ago, my Head of State, Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, acquainted this body with the devastation visited on Sierra Leone initially as a spillover from the civil war in Liberia. He explained to this Assembly the pain and the agony that our people have had to endure as a result of that conflict and its ramifications for regional peace and stability.

Regrettably, I am again constrained to inform you that the conflict has persisted and that the lives of many innocent Sierra Leoneans continue to be lost. In spite of my Government's repeated overtures for peace and reconciliation there is as yet no let-up in the fighting on the ground and the rebel attacks against innocent and unsuspecting civilians in provincial cities and several towns and villages in the country continue unabated. Consequently, we are witnessing today the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of our people and thousands more have had to seek refugee status in neighbouring countries, not to mention the devastation caused to the national economy.

What all this means is that the Liberian situation is inextricably linked with the situation in Sierra Leone. It is therefore our ardent hope that with the budding peace in Liberia, Sierra Leoneans can realistically expect a lull in the fighting on their own soil to enable them embark on economic reconstruction and rehabilitation. We would, in this regard, like to express our profound thanks and appreciation to the West African leaders who have made the success achieved in Liberia possible. The leadership of Nigeria, Ghana and the countries contributing to the Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deserve special commendation. So do the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), organizations which in their own diverse ways, have contributed to the peaceful developments in Liberia.

We therefore call upon this Organization and all peace-loving people the world over to support the new government in Liberia. At the same time, we would fervently appeal to the Liberian people to rise to the occasion, for in the final analysis, it must be Liberians themselves who should find a lasting solution to their problems. We wish the New Liberian Council of State and the people of Liberia success in their search for durable peace in their country, for we believe that such success will have a positive impact on Sierra Leone.

The need to strengthen the peace momentum in Liberia is particularly important because during the disarmament process there are going to be thousands of hardened former combatants, some of them probably still armed, who might be tempted to relocate the theatre of war unless they are effectively disarmed, brought under control and suitably reintegrated into Liberian society.

Closely linked to the search for peace in Sierra Leone is the implementation of the programme of democratization announced by my Head of State, His Excellency Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, three years ago for the return of Sierra Leone to multiparty civilian rule. I am happy to report that this programme is still on course, despite the unavoidable delays resulting from the rebel war. The ban on political parties has now been lifted and indeed the registration of political parties completed. A National Consultative Conference convened by the Interim National Electoral Commission was held in mid-August to seek national consensus on how elections could be conducted in a war situation and to discuss some other related issues. At that Conference, it was agreed that both presidential and parliamentary elections will be held not later than in February 1996. The Revolutionary United Front, the rebel faction, was invited to participate in that political process, but unfortunately, their response, as has consistently been the case, was negative. Yet, in spite of this, we continue to persist in pursuing peace and continue to state clearly that the peace option is still on the table. Be that as it may, I should also state that as a responsible Government, we cannot give up the armed struggle, if only out of the sense of legitimate obligation to protect the lives and properties of innocent Sierra Leoneans, who have borne a large measure of the brunt of our senseless rebel war.

At this juncture, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to this Organization, to the OAU and to the Commonwealth for responding positively to our request for help by way of exploratory fact-finding missions to Sierra Leone. In the case of the United Nations, the Secretary-General subsequently sent a resident Special Envoy in the person of Ambassador Berhanu Dinka, who is still in the country offering assistance. It is an encouraging sign that the international community, through the United Nations, the OAU and the Commonwealth, is just as anxious as the National Provisional Ruling Council Government to see an early end to our destructive war so that our peaceful citizens may once again be able to live in an environment free of fear and anxiety and to engage in their ordinary daily pursuits. At the same time, while appealing to the international community to help us with logistical, financial and related support in the implementation of our political programme, we will also require similar assistance, at the appropriate time, in rebuilding and rehabilitating our devastated economy. In this connection, we would like to express our deep and sincere appreciation to all friendly Governments, particularly Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana for their assistance in our trying moments.

The world-wide problem of refugees and displaced persons continues to be our concern, particularly as we ourselves have become victims of this scourge. More than half a million of our citizens have become displaced in Sierra Leone, and hundreds of thousands more are refugees in neighbouring countries. The yearning of all these people is for an opportunity to finally return to their homes, settle down and rebuild their lives. We urge the international community to urgently help us bring our people back home.

The use of narcotic drugs has for some time now been a source of concern, mainly to developing countries, because of the inherent danger it poses to society, especially the young. Today, no country can claim to be insulated from this scourge, as it is now a global phenomenon. The abuse of drugs and drug-related substances is gaining in prominence, not only in Sierra Leone, but in the whole West African subregion, and there is no doubt that with the prevalence of rebel wars it will continue to plague us long after these wars are over, thereby threatening social peace and stability in the countries concerned.

The Government of Sierra Leone is determined to take all necessary measures against drug abuse and illicit trafficking domestically, as well as through subregional and international cooperation. To this end, my Government has ratified the 1961, 1971 and 1988 Conventions dealing with illicit drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, and has set up both inter-ministerial and technical committees comprising all relevant sectoral departments to advise the Government on effective measures to contain drug abuse and other related ills.

No one can deny that the threat of global nuclear destruction posed by the cold war has receded. However, it is becoming increasingly clear to us that where one type of peril has been combated others are swiftly arising to take its place. Today, the breakdown of bipolar control has lifted restrictions on long- simmering civic, ethnic and territorial disputes. Violence has brought the very existence of some States into question and, with it, gross violations of human rights, including instances of genocide exceeded only, perhaps, by those of the Second World War. Conflicts are becoming more numerous and more complex, and are scattered all over the globe, even as there are glimmers of hope.

In Africa, for example, we welcome the recent developments whereby both parties in the Angolan conflict are moving towards allowing the will of the Angolan people finally to prevail over the barrel of the gun. My delegation also notes with satisfaction the agreement by UNITA to join with the MPLA in a government of national unity. In like manner, the acceptance by the Mozambican opposition leader, Comrade Afonso Dhlakama, and his men of the outcome of the electoral process should be a source of relief to all Africans and peace-loving people everywhere. It is our fervent hope that the Mozambicans will emulate the example of their neighbours in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia — societies which have shown that, with the right political attitude and good will, it is quite possible to replace strife with reconciliation and hatred with accommodation.

In the Middle East, we view the developments that started a few years ago with the mutual recognition of the PLO and Israel, followed later by the signing of the Washington Declaration between Jordan and Israel, which ended the state of war between them, as extremely important positive steps towards the full realization of peace in that region. In like manner, we welcome the just-concluded Interim Agreement on Jericho and the West Bank, signed by Israel and the PLO in Washington.

In the same vein, we commend Norway, the United States, Egypt and all those others that in one way or the

other have played, and are continuing to play, a role in moving this historic conflict towards a peaceful resolution.

On the other aspect of the Middle Eastern equation, we urge Israel, Syria and Lebanon to join fully in the historic peace process and display a spirit of accommodation, in the interest of all the people of the Middle East and mankind as a whole.

With regard to the dispute between Kuwait and Iraq, we call upon Iraq fully to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait, in accordance with the terms of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. However, we call upon the international community, in applying sanctions against Iraq, not to lose sight of the suffering being experienced by the innocent civilians of that country.

My delegation welcomes the decision to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a decision which my country co-sponsored. It was indeed a decision of momentous importance, which heralded what has been described as a major success of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. However, we are disappointed that indications since the extension are that final agreement on an immediate and comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty seems uncertain. If humanity is to maintain any lasting hope for the future, we must act now with courage and decisiveness to achieve a nuclear-free world. In this regard, we call unequivocally for the cessation of nuclear tests of any kind in all environments, and call upon the Conference on Disarmament to work towards the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty within the shortest possible time.

International peace can hardly be maintained in a world in which some men are free while others are under the yoke of colonialism. Being fully aware of that problem and imbued with the idealism that brought this Organization into being, Member States solemnly resolved to remove any vestiges of colonialism from the world. This line of thinking achieved full stature at the United Nations in 1960, when the landmark resolution 1514 (XV), incorporating the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, was adopted.

Today, as the world celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, its considerable success in the field of decolonization is universally acclaimed. We remember the history of the struggle against colonialism and pay tribute to all those who were part of that struggle. We remain mindful of the sacrifices that made it possible for hundreds of millions of people to achieve self-determination and independence. We commend the work of the Special Committee of 24 for its effective contribution to the application of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. My country has had the honour of serving that Committee — it is, in fact, currently chairing it — and we are proud to have been able to make some contribution to its work and to bringing freedom to a good portion of the human race.

In that regard, while we welcome with profound pleasure the State of Palau to this world Organization as the 185th Member, it is my delegation's view that the task of decolonization remains unfinished. Further concerted and determined action is still required on the part of all involved to win freedom for people who are still unable to exercise their right to self-determination — mostly peoples of small island States, located mainly in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. These territories are confronted with unique problems that require new and innovative solutions geared towards the implementation of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism by the Year 2000, launched by the General Assembly in 1988.

We believe that the situation of these Territories should not be seen as an impediment to the application of the principle of self-determination. The wishes of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories are what count most. We appeal for the strengthened and continued support of the administering Powers, whose cooperation with the Special Committee is essential for the progress of the Territories towards self-determination. We count on the support of the specialized agencies and the international community as a whole to continue to assist the Non-Self-Governing Territories in enhancing their standard of living and promoting their self-sufficiency. We also truly believe that our combined and unrelenting efforts will ensure the fulfilment of the promise of freedom, lasting peace, sustained growth and sustainable development for all the people of our planet in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

My delegation welcomes the successful outcome of the Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the World Summit for Social

Development convened in Copenhagen in 1995 and the recently concluded United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Referring to the Beijing Conference, we note with satisfaction that the history of the United Nations for the past 50 years has also been one of steady progress for women, from a drive for their civil and political rights to their recognition as equal partners in the broader societal context.

We appeal for the urgent implementation of the recommendations, conclusions and decisions adopted in these various international Conferences. We believe that in their realization partly lies the possibility of lasting peace and security, economic progress and social emancipation for all humankind.

We note with satisfaction the positive role played by our Organization in facilitating international agreement on thorny issues, whose resolution would certainly have been more difficult, if not impossible, in other forums. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the new Agreements signed at Marrakesh in April last year, establishing the World Trade Organization. However, we stress the need for a continuous assessment of its likely impact on developing countries, especially the least developed among them. We fear that countries which are net importers of food, such as Sierra Leone, might face the prospect of higher food import bills arising from the liberalization of trade in the agricultural sector. Other areas in the Agreements which open up competition between developed and developing countries also need to be constantly reviewed to ensure that the latter do not suffer unduly.

Since the end of the cold war, it has become increasingly clear that the United Nations is finding it difficult to deal with the challenges of the post-cold-war era. As we enter the next millennium, we believe it should be a strong, revitalized, effective and purposeful United Nations, able to play its full role as envisaged in its Charter.

With democracy taking root among nations, logic and common sense dictate that decisions of the United Nations should also carry the necessary imprint of the collective will of its Members. Indeed, the Security Council, which is charged with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should be perceived as legitimate in its decision-making process. My delegation takes the view that a more efficient, transparent and democratic Security Council, embracing the views of a wider sector of the international community, could stand it in good stead to deal with the challenges of the next millennium — challenges which touch humanity generally, rather than individual States which often lack the capacity and the ability to handle them successfully. Such challenges include the problem of drugs, devastating diseases like acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), money laundering, poverty and many more yet unknown. We sincerely hope that the final outcome of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on institutional reforms will adequately address these concerns and offer appropriately bold suggestions and solutions.

The relevance of the United Nations after 50 years as an instrument for the peaceful existence and orderly development of every nation no longer requires justification. We commend the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for initiating a restructuring process which will ultimately ensure the enhanced viability and efficiency of our Organization. We also pay tribute to all their predecessors whose own efforts contributed to the survival of the Organization. Member States owe it to posterity to adopt a firm commitment to the provisions of the Charter and not to undermine the credibility of our common Organization. We renew our call for all Member States to be resolute and uncompromising in the quest for global peace, security and social and economic justice as we move into the twenty-first century. Let me, in conclusion, reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations Charter and dedication to the principles which undergird our Organization.

The Acting President: I now call on the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai.

Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan): On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the representatives of the world's nations are gathered here with hearts full of hope for a better future, as well as for the cause of the peace and prosperity of mankind, in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm and animation.

The Afghan nation, in spite of the immense difficulties it has encountered, shares that optimism with many of the nations represented here, as well as confidence in its ability to overcome those challenges.

War and conflict always bring with them miseries and devastation. The last 17 years have taught our children only to differentiate the various sounds of guns, rockets, tanks and mortars, rather than teaching them

literacy or providing them with basic nutrition, security and peace of mind.

We turn to this world family, as an institution dedicated to the cause of humanity, the self-determination of nations, human rights and democracy, to pronounce itself opposed to the forces aiming to create a bloodbath in an already devastated Afghanistan.

When I return to my homeland — the home of 1.7 million martyr graves, tens of millions of unexploded land-mines, 2 million disabled people, hundreds of thousands of orphans and widows — I am expected to be carrying answers as to why this world, which claims to be committed to human rights and justice, has remained a spectator of the sufferings of Afghans, brought about by foreign interference. Why, in spite of the complete peace, security and tranquillity prevailing in the capital for many months past, have the United Nations offices unjustifiably abandoned us by remaining outside?

Our people find it astonishing that in an era of such developed mass communication, which leaves no distance between different corners of the globe, the apparently insurmountable difficulties — in particular, the actual causes of the continuing imposed war — are not understood. I am confident that there are people who clearly see the factors contributing to the continuation of the conflict. There are forces that insist on seeing our political system subordinated to their political and economic designs and policies. This is the actual source of the conflict.

The crisis in Afghanistan is often perceived as a subject of academic studies. Some call this a civil war in a society that they consider "fragmented". Others look at it as the scene of a contest, a struggle for power. Yet others try to find the roots of the conflict in the ethnic and tribal composition of the country. The truth is far more clear: whatever it is, it is not a civil war; nor is it a tribal or ethnic conflict; it is an imposed war.

We have learned from history that our existence depends on our unity. We, like many other nations, want to live in peace and security, as well as benefit from economic development, welfare and democracy, which will be available only in peaceful circumstances. We want to live in peace with our neighbours and to engage in good-neighbourly relations. We leave it up to the astute observers of the United Nations and the impartial analysts of the world community to judge the efficacy of the United Nations in alleviating the sufferings in Afghanistan.

The year 1995 opened with good omens for Afghanistan. The country witnessed positive changes towards peace and political stability. Following the removal of the sources of danger from the southern part of the capital, the people of Kabul found a moment of peace after years of being rocketed indiscriminately. Every day since mid-March an average of about 3,500 refugees returned home — mostly to the capital — according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Prices fell sharply. Goods and services became plentiful in the markets. The Government reopened 156 schools for girls and boys, and the universities reopened in an atmosphere of security and peace.

Official delegations from the United States, Switzerland, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Tajikistan, the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, the People's Republic of China and the Sudan, as well as many international organizations and others, came to Kabul. High-ranking Afghan delegations also travelled abroad.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan even won an opportunity to take steps towards peace and regional security. Among the Tajikistan peace mediators, Professor Burhan-ud-din Rabbani, the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, accomplished the most. We remember that his peace initiative conduced to unprecedented and positive changes regarding the civil strife in Tajikistan. Kabul city, for the first time, hosted direct talks between His Excellency Imam Ali Rakhmanov, the President of Tajikistan, and Sayed Abdullah Nouri, the leader of the Islamic Revival Movement, representing all the Tajik opposition. In a historic press conference the two leaders embraced each other and agreed on a longer-term cease-fire.

Confidence-building measures were taken on the basis of domestic endeavours between Afghanistan and the opposition. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, with the aim of putting an end to all problems in the country, presented to the United Nations a peace plan, on most of whose items there emerged, for the first time, a sense of agreement among all sides. The plan pledged to the nation the convening of a Grand National Assembly — Loya Jirga, as we call it — within a year. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, while leaving to the United Nations Special Mission the question of the creation of an appropriate mechanism for the convening of the Grand National Assembly, promised to agree to the participation

of the opposition groups in the current Supreme State Council and in the present one-year-term transitional Government until the convening of the Grand National Assembly.

As a result of these proposals the people of our country and of the region felt more optimistic about the return of peace to Afghanistan. However, those needlessly afraid of an independent, stable and self-reliant Afghanistan sought to change the course of events to coincide with their own interests. They once again used the made-up Taliban group — whose actual identity and character and the sources of whose funding and arming are yet to be made known to most of the members in this Hall — equipped with arms, light and heavy, from across the border of our country and with air power. Ironically enough, they recently chose to target the west of Afghanistan, which, according to earlier statements of Ambassador Mahmoud Mestiri, head of the United Nation Special Mission to Afghanistan, was the best model of healthy administration, order, stability and people's welfare.

Intent on exposing the Islamic State to instability, military intelligence services across the border tried hard to unite the opponents of the State under a single command. They boosted the Taliban mercenaries with their own frontier militia. Thousands of those being trained across Afghan borders launched attacks against the Shindand air base and a number of other western provinces of the country, including Herat, as a result of which the peaceful city of Herat was on 5 September turned into a place of occupation, chaos and insecurity. A great number of civilians lost their lives. Tens of thousands were forced to leave their houses. The bands of the so-called Taliban, or religious students, began their rule by closing schools for girls and the universities, as well as banning women from working in offices or teaching in schools. They have even forbidden the use of televisions and videos, and all movie theatres are closed down in the areas under their occupation.

As the so-called Taliban are said to have the capability of jeopardizing any viable peace process in the country, I deem it necessary to register some basic facts about this mysterious movement.

In Islamic countries there are many religious schools or "Madrasas" where several subjects related to Islam are taught. The purpose of these schools is to prepare Muslim youth for religious service to their countrymen. In no "Madrasa" in the world is the subject of modern warfare, such as the use of artillery and rockets, or the flying of warplanes, taught. That is the work of military academies.

The only modern items the Taliban mercenaries are aware of are advanced armaments. As for their links with the outside, the most pertinent and very important question is: if their numbers are about 30,000, as they claim, and each of them would require $100 for daily and military expenses, who is paying the more than $88 million a month for their expenses?

As for logistical support, for instance, it is calculated that in order for the Taliban to keep their transport vehicles, tanks and other armoured vehicles running they need more than 15,000 gallons of fuel each day. That is separate from almost the same amount of fuel that they require as reserve. Again, who is providing them with such huge logistical support?

The Taliban have no single leader. They claim to have a Central Council in Kandahar. However, no platform or political agenda has been made known yet. The declarations of their many leaders are not consistent. On 20 September one of their leaders, Mullah Mishr, told Peter Greste, a correspondent of the Reuters news agency, that the problem of Afghanistan could only be solved through war.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan expressed the intense indignation of its people and Government in its letters of 5 September 1995 (S/1995/767) and 14 September 1995 (S/1995/795) addressed to the Secretary-General, calling for immediate measures to end the state of occupation in western Afghanistan. We specifically requested the United Nations to send a fact-finding mission to the western part of the country to investigate and assess the reality of the state of occupation. That is the responsibility of the Security Council.

The resistance of our people together with the forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, against the mercenaries and foreign militia, has been further strengthened. As a result, the Province of Ghowr, east of Herat, once occupied, has been liberated. The foreign armed intervention, however, reached a new dimension. The bands of mercenaries were reinforced west of Kabul to attack the capital, the plan of attack being engineered and guided from abroad.

We strongly demand that the United Nations Special Mission break its silence regarding those mercenaries and answer the relevant questions, including whether this

band is a threat to peace. This is particularly pertinent because the Special Mission once considered the Taliban to be a positive factor for peace. Is it not time for the Special Mission to find out the intentions of the Taliban in relation to General Assembly resolutions on Afghanistan?

Mr. Odlum (Saint Lucia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Events have proved that the United Nations Special Mission encountered many difficulties and challenges, owing to the lack of an adequate capability to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by General Assembly resolutions 48/208 and 49/140. To enhance the capabilities of the Special Mission, the Islamic State of Afghanistan submits the following five-point proposal.

First, the necessity to reinforce the Mission requires the formation of a contact group on Afghanistan to speed up the peace process. The contact group on Afghanistan should be composed of one representative of the United Nations Special Mission; one representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which is already active in the peace process in Afghanistan; one representative from among the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, but not a country directly involved; one representative from among the members of the European Union; and one representative from among the members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Secondly, the contact group would promote the peace process in Afghanistan by focusing its endeavours in the light of information, evidence and documents provided to the Special Mission pertaining to the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

Thirdly, the contact group on Afghanistan would search for ways and means to end foreign intervention and interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and make effective and appropriate recommendations to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Security Council.

Fourthly, the various proposed programmes to bring peace to Afghanistan should be studied by the contact group in consultation with the involved Afghan parties. These endeavours would have the following objectives:

Creation of a commission for the convening of the Grand National Assembly, or "Loya Jirga"; this commission would also have the mandate to draft the Constitution, to include a firm disposition guaranteeing democracy and human rights for the future Afghanistan.

Convening of the Grand National Assembly, or "Loya Jirga", within one year.

Election of the future leader of Afghanistan for a subsequent fixed term of office.

Adoption of the Constitution.

Formation of the first parliament from among the members of the Grand National Assembly, which could represent the administrative units of the country on the basis of their proportion of population.

Fifthly, the contact group on Afghanistan would immediately approach all Afghan groups and invite them to participate in the Supreme State Council and Government, until the formation of the Grand National Assembly, or "Loya Jirga".

The contact group on Afghanistan would also play a crucial role in the reconstruction of the country, as required by General Assembly resolution 49/140, adopted on 20 December 1994.

We consider that proposal, which has already been submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to be a secure and short path towards peace, national *rapprochement* and stability, through the cessation of hostilities.

To those who refuse to accept the one-year lapse of time for that peace process, insisting on an unconditional and immediate transfer of power, we say that a period of one year is not long in the life of a nation. Had there been an agreement a year ago for the transfer of power and for the consolidation of the political process, we would by now have been in the process of transferring power.

We solemnly ask the General Assembly to take this proposal into consideration when discussing the agenda item on Afghanistan during this historic fiftieth session.

Having said this, we would like to state — for those who insist on the need for a military solution to the problem — that the Islamic State of Afghanistan, while willing to transfer power to a legitimate and lawful

authority, has the capacity and capability to respond to the terrorist acts of mercenaries linked to foreign quarters.

Afghanistan would not allow any circles to undermine the process of the peaceful transfer of power and the normal political process that is to be implemented under the supervision of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Those cliques of outsiders who are recruiting, training, arming, and providing financial assistance to the mercenaries — as well as reinforcing them with their own militia — and using such reactionary groups to destabilize a moderate Islamic system which believes in democracy and human rights, are wrong in their assessments and calculations. Such foreign circles may think that after the usurpation of power by the Taliban all will go well for them. In fact, they will add a further problem, especially by bringing onto the scene a faction which has no factual presence on Afghanistan's political scene. These circles should be aware that the peace and security in the capital, the actual relative peace and stability in the country and in the region, would be jeopardized by such an erroneous miscalculation. The same error was made by the former Soviet Union in 1979.

For the record, we would like to emphasize that those who ignite a fire in our country will burn themselves. It would then be too late to return to the peaceful political process on which we are now trying to embark.

The statement made by His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Pakistan on 27 September 1995 before this Assembly pertaining to the relation between Afghanistan and Pakistan was itself a clear illustration of his Government's unfriendly intentions towards my country. The assertions of His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, as contained in his statement, need to be responded to for the sake of the record.

First, the Pakistani Foreign Minister was trying to confuse our friends and to divert the attention of world public opinion from his country's own acts of blatant interference in Afghanistan and from the invasion by its militia in assisting the so-called Taliban in Western Afghanistan to the tragic incident in the Pakistani Embassy at Kabul.

In this regard the following explanations are necessary. I express, on behalf of His Excellency the President and the Government and the people of Afghanistan, profound regret about the very sad and grievous incident that occurred in the Embassy of Pakistan at Kabul on 6 September 1995. This message has also been forwarded by an official note of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan to the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan. Furthermore, I have conveyed two messages by telephone from Kabul to His Excellency Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.

The tragic incident contradicts the traditional hospitality of the Afghan people. While we express our grief at the incident, which we consider unjustifiable, at the same time we say that some aspects of the events have been overlooked by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, whose Government tried to use different forums for political gains through a distortion of the facts.

Allow me, for the sake of the record, to point out the sequence of incidents as they occurred. On 6 September 1995, on the morrow of the occupation of Herat City by the so-called Taliban mercenaries, with the help of foreign militias, the people of Kabul held a peaceful demonstration. Tens of thousands of peaceful demonstrators gathered outside the compound of the Embassy of Pakistan at Kabul chanting anti-Pakistani slogans. The staff of the Embassy, contrary to all recognized principles of international law, used a firearm from inside the Embassy premises against the peaceful demonstrators. This caused the death of one of the students, a student by the name of Badruddin Muslim, an eleventh grader in the Naderia High School of Kabul. This highly unjustifiable and provocative act of the Embassy staff incited the fury of the demonstrators, who in the beginning were non-violent and peaceful, gathered only to express their deep resentment at the occupation of part of their country.

It is noteworthy that the security forces of the Government were already active in the early morning, having observed the spontaneous gathering of people in different parts of Kabul city. The security forces formed two security belts around the Embassy premises. However, the death of the young demonstrator caused a sudden reaction and, unfortunately, the crowd got out of control. The security forces tried their utmost to prevent the upsurge of violence and to protect the Embassy and its staff. Regrettably, despite the losses suffered by the security forces, five of whose personnel were killed while protecting the Embassy, they did not succeed in preventing this tragic event. Mr. Ejaz Ali, the Third Secretary of the Pakistani Embassy at Kabul, a witness to the event, acknowledged in an interview at Islamabad airport on 7 September 1995 that the security forces of the Afghan Government exerted efforts to avert the tragic happening.

We declare from this rostrum that the Afghan nation never had recourse to terrorism, even during the long years of resistance against the invasion of their country by the former Soviet Union. That fact clearly shows that, despite heavy sacrifices by the Afghan nation, it never had recourse to terrorist acts against any consulate or embassy of the former Soviet Union.

Secondly, in his statement the Foreign Minister of Pakistan referred nine times to the Islamic State of Afghanistan as the "Kabul regime" or the "Rabbani regime". We do not intend to reciprocate with similar unfair language because of our sincerity and commitment to friendship towards Pakistan.

Thirdly, it is ironic to witness His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Pakistan prescribing the type, nature and characteristics of a government that he would like to see in Afghanistan. My delegation, however, reciprocates the sense of good will and brotherhood he expressed regarding our two nations. Moreover, we recall with appreciation the strong sense of brotherhood and Islamic solidarity by which the fraternal nation of Pakistan extended its support to the just struggle, the Jihad of the Afghan nation, against the invading forces of the former Soviet Union. We trust that our Pakistani brothers are also fully aware of the sacrifices we made when Afghanistan served as a shield for the protection of Pakistan territories against the most important mobilization of an army since the war in Viet Nam.

However, our complaint is addressed, not to the nation of Pakistan, but against the manifest interferences of Pakistani authorities, especially the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), which is the Pakistani military intelligence. Sometimes the explanations of the Pakistani Government, which claims to remain impartial, seem to be justified owing to the fact that the Pakistani civilian administration is not capable of containing the operations of the ISI, a powerful military-intelligence body which has emerged as a State within the State.

Secondly, we wonder which of the internationally accepted norms and principles governing relations between nations justify the Pakistani desire to prescribe the type and characteristics of government for a sovereign and independent neighbour. Could there be any clearer example of Pakistani interference in our internal affairs?

The Foreign Minister of Pakistan has repeatedly claimed that Pakistan is not interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Let us leave aside all evidence pertaining to the aggression of the Pakistani frontier militia on Afghan territory, as set out in the documents of the Security Council that we have submitted, as well as the comments and statements of independent international reporters and scholarly analysts on Afghanistan identifying and highlighting the interference of Pakistani military intelligence in the internal affairs of Afghanistan as the only source of the present-day conflict in Afghanistan. We need only refer to internationally recognized newspapers: *The Washington Times*, in its issue of 24 September 1995, *The Times* of London, 26 September 1995, and *The Canberra Times*, 11 September 1995.

Both *The Washington Times* and *The Times* of London quote Ambassador Mestiri's comments regarding the so-called Taliban and Pakistan's involvement in supporting them.

The Times of London of Tuesday, 26 September 1995, under the headline "Student army gives notice of attack on Kabul", states,

> "Mahmoud Mestiri, who heads the United Nations peace efforts in Afghanistan, said he was convinced Pakistan was behind the Taliban group".

The Washington Times of 24 September 1995, in an article entitled "Pakistan aid to rebels has Kabul talking war", states,

> "Even the United Nations special envoy to Afghanistan is suspicious ... 'The power of Taliban is mysterious', envoy Mahmoud Mestiri said. 'I think they are getting money and help, maybe from Pakistan'."

The same article, written by Ian Stewart of the Associated Press, contains a description of a Taliban fighter:

> "One of a new breed of noble fighter in Afghanistan, the dust-caked 19-year-old is armed with a Kalashnikov and the writings of the Muslim Prophet Mohammed and trained, he says, in Pakistan".

In his statement, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan cannot conceal the true intention of his Government with respect to Afghanistan. He inadvertently uncovers the intention:

> "provocation will not deter us from our steadfast path of neutrality towards the Afghan people and the unity of Afghanistan or from non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs, nor will it affect our abiding friendship and brotherhood with the Afghan nation". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 8th meeting, p. 22)*

However, subsequently the Foreign Minister of Pakistan negates the spirit of the above by saying,

> "In the meantime, we would like to assure the people of Afghanistan that we shall stand by them in their hour of trial. We shall not abandon them." *(ibid.)*

I am certain that the words "we shall stand by them in their hour of trial" will raise a question in the minds of the Members of the Assembly: what could Pakistan's intention be in making such a statement?

The former Soviet Union's aggression in Afghanistan is long over. Our nation would like our neighbours and the world to assist us in our endeavours towards national reconciliation and peace.

Moreover, His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Pakistan promises that they will not abandon the Afghans. The Assembly should realize that this amounts to assuring the opposition of the Afghan Government that Pakistan will continue interfering in Afghanistan's affairs in their favour until the Islamic State is destabilized and a proxy Government obedient to the will of Pakistan's Government is brought to power.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan has cast into doubt the legitimacy and legality of the Afghan Government and the territory governed by it. We call on His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Pakistan to allow any impartial observer to visit the north-western agencies and find out if the central Government of Pakistan has any administrative authority over them. Is it not a fact that the production of firearms has continued, as an ongoing traditional trade, ever since the establishment of Pakistan? Where is heroin, the most dangerous enemy of humanity, produced and refined? John F. Burns of *The New York Times* wrote,

> "Top army officers have been accused in the past of conniving with drug lords, to the extent of running heroin shipments to Karachi aboard army-owned trucks". *("Heroin scourges million Pakistanis", The New York Times, 5 April 1995, Section A, p. 12)*

The Islamic State of Afghanistan and Pakistan will both be losers if they try to confront each other. The only way leading towards securing both countries' highest interests is to re-establish, broaden and consolidate their mutual brotherly relations on the basis of equality of States, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty and the right of each to determine its own future.

President Rabbani is a strong believer in the perpetual necessity for both countries to establish ties of fraternity and cooperation. Both countries, and the entire region of Asia where they live side by side, will gain through Afghan-Pakistani friendship.

While the international community is deploying efforts to prevent conflicts and wars, the peace and security of individuals and of human communities are under the threat of an undeclared and inhumane war waged by the world's terrorists. This year the world has witnessed terrible terrorist acts, such as the tragedies in Oklahoma City, Paris and Tokyo, in which many innocent civilians lost their lives.

Prosperity and the welfare of the human being cannot be secured without tranquillity and peace of mind. If the international community does not take drastic measures to eradicate terrorism, people in different regions of the world will continue to live in fear and under the menace of terrorist acts. Islam teaches the principle of the rights of innocents to live in safety and dignity. The Islamic State of Afghanistan considers that there is a great need for the signing of an international treaty ensuring meaningful cooperation between States, in the form of a convention to combat terrorism.

Afghanistan, as one of the early Members of the United Nations, contributed to the drafting, discussion and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and participated in the drafting of both Covenants of Human Rights. We once again reaffirm our deep commitment to these international instruments.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan considers respect for human rights one of its fundamental objectives. During the year under consideration, however, the human rights of a number of Afghan citizens in the country, as well as international humanitarian law, have, unfortunately, been violated as a result of the continued terror perpetrated by the so-called Taliban. The Taliban mercenaries' closing of schools for girls and depriving women of their right to work has been a major violation

of human rights. The Islamic State of Afghanistan has the conviction that taking appropriate and effective international measures towards putting an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan would serve as a major step towards the realization of human rights in the country.

As far as the issue of women's rights in Afghanistan is concerned, as brought to the attention of Mr. Paik, the new United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan, during his recent trip to Kabul, such concerns do not seem to be appropriate in the case of a country where 383 women army officers, ranking from the position of Lieutenant-General to lower positions, defend their people and country; where women are serving as pilots in the Army, as well as parachutists; and where women are representing their country at Afghanistan diplomatic missions and are serving in various branches of the Administration. Women's rights are guaranteed in the presently enforced laws and regulations governing the life of our nation.

I turn now to the question of land-mines. For the first time, an international meeting was held in Geneva on mine clearance. This meeting further enhanced international awareness of different dimensions of the land-mine crisis and contributed to strengthening international cooperation. It is an alarming fact that every year, while 100,000 land-mines are removed, more than 2 million land-mines are laid. An estimated 30 people are killed by land-mines, and as many as 60 are maimed, every single day. The slow pace of demining operations is another major concern to be noted. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), at the current pace of the mine-removal process, it will take 1,100 years to get rid of existing mines - and the laying of mines continues in different regions of the world.

As we already stated in the Geneva meeting on mine clearance, only the adoption of a convention which would ban the production, sale and stockpiling of all varieties of land-mines, and especially a sincere commitment on the part of mine-producing countries to such an instrument, would serve effectively to put an end to this problem. Afghanistan, a war-stricken country, where the largest number of land-mines have been laid, needs further assistance from the international community. This assistance would further help the cause of the repatriation of refugees and the revitalization of agricultural activities all over the country.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan expresses its serious concern at the acts of aggression and genocide that continue to be committed against the people of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Effective measures should be taken to put an end, once and for all, to this tragic crisis. Srebrenica and Zepa must be restored as safe areas and the siege of Sarajevo must be ended. The International Tribunal on war crimes in the former Yugoslavia should bring to justice those Serbian civil and military individuals who perpetrated crimes of war and genocide, and crimes against humanity. Afghanistan has repeatedly maintained the view that the arms embargo against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is not applicable *de jure*. The right of the victim to self-defence has to be respected and restored.

I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to one of the great threats to the life, health and well-being of present and future generations. This man-made plague is narcotic drugs, and its production, sale and smuggling. The expansion of the poppy fields in my country, Afghanistan, as one of the legacies of war, is unfortunate. Statistics show that the cultivation of poppy increased during 1994, as compared to 1993. This is in spite of the allocation of about $25 million, which the international community spent in Afghanistan through non-governmental organizations. The Islamic State of Afghanistan cannot agree to the procedure through which the assistance was channeled. Perhaps an evaluation is needed to correct the procedure. The Islamic State of Afghanistan declares its sincere readiness to cooperate effectively with regional and international organizations. We are working for the preparation of a master plan to effectively combat narcotic drugs on the regional and international levels. We have invited Mr. Giacomelli, the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, to visit Afghanistan and speed up the drawing up of such a master plan.

We have had critical episodes in our life, but we have a vision of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan; an Afghanistan which it is hoped this Assembly will render free of foreign interference in its internal affairs; an Afghanistan where our people come to be blessed with brotherhood and understanding, national conciliation and unity; a country to which its 3 million refugees will have returned with confidence and assurance, and where our intellectuals, as a source of hope, will dedicate their vast energy and experience and their scientific and physical potential to the cause of rebuilding their country; a country that will once again serve as a major factor in the strengthening of regional peace and stability; a country

that will be actively involved in the common efforts of this world family in combating extremism, adhering to a positive and dynamic impartial and non-aligned policy, and firmly participating in combating terrorism and drug abuse. Such a vision takes its source from the heart of our nation.

Our expectation of the world community is that it assist us in achieving these goals. The objectives of the reconstruction and economic development of Afghanistan cannot be achieved without economic assistance from industrialized nations and other countries that are able to furnish such assistance. Afghanistan has enormous economic capabilities. During the time the former Soviet Union thought of our country as its strategic backyard, the world's major corporations were prevented from becoming involved in the exploration of Afghanistan's natural resources and wealth. At the threshold of Afghanistan's reconstruction and rehabilitation, possibilities exist for the exploration of our natural wealth, such as natural gas, oil, copper, iron, precious stones and even uranium. Afghanistan can become a major producer and exporter of fruit. Once the crisis is over, Afghanistan will emerge as one of the most attractive sites for private investment. Afghanistan, a land-locked country, is now vitally important at the heart of Asia, connecting Central Asia to the south and the Middle East as a historical transit route.

From this rostrum, we invite the industrialized countries, as well as private sectors, to benefit from the enormous investment opportunities in our country. In this context, the Islamic State of Afghanistan warmly welcomes delegations determined to conduct relevant studies, as it is expecting a number of potential investors in the coming month. This move would itself contribute towards the further strengthening of stability and an early return of peace to Afghanistan.

The Acting President: I call on the next speaker, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, His Excellency Mr. Stevo Crvenkovski.

Mr. Crvenkovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I extend to Mr. Freitas do Amaral my warm congratulations on his election as President of this jubilee fiftieth session of the General Assembly. At the same time I wish to express appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for his very successful work.

On 3 October 1995, in a cowardly terrorist act, an attempt was made on the life of the President of the Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov. This assassination attempt was a deliberate political act intended to destabilize my country. It was carried out, not insignificantly, at a time when the centuries-old dream of the Macedonian people for their own State and for an equal role in the international community had come true. Furthermore, it happened at the very time when the resolution of the situation in the Balkans was in sight and when all of our neighbours and the world had come to accept the fact that the Republic of Macedonia was a reality, and a factor of peace and stability.

The attempt to assassinate President Gligorov is an attack against the independent and peace-loving position of Macedonia. It is directed against life in peace and against the well-being of all our citizens. This terrorist act has been strongly condemned and decisively rejected by all of my countrymen, as well as by the international community.

The efforts of the United Nations against terrorism — a criminal phenomenon — must continue with a strong determination to wipe this scourge out completely. We should all fight unabatedly against the forces of darkness and the power-hungry demagogues who are the main source and generator of criminal terrorist activities.

The attempt to assassinate my President on 3 October 1995 shall not, under any circumstances, divert us in our pursuit of democracy, reforms, and the development of good-neighbourly relations with all of our neighbours, in brief, our efforts to transform our country into a modern European State.

I wish to take this opportunity to express to the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and all delegations in this body our sincere gratitude for their sympathy and solidarity and for their wishes for the speedy recovery of my President.

As our Organization approaches the next 50 years, as we approach the twenty-first century, it is timely to acknowledge and pay tribute to the great achievements of the United Nations in bringing about a better and safer world and to stress the need to work together to improve our Organization and prepare for the challenges of the future.

Throughout the past 50 years, the United Nations has been the right place in which to build better understanding among nations, the right place in which to address some of the basic problems and needs of

humanity and the right place in which to coordinate actions towards a brighter future for mankind. The United Nations assisted in achieving peace in many regions of the world; it succeeded in preventing many conflicts; it helped in decolonization; it delivered humanitarian assistance; it succeeded in minimizing the nuclear threat and in building bridges over many gulfs between countries all over the world.

In the past few years, very important decisions have been adopted at many United Nations conferences, such as the Earth Summit in Rio, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in New York and the discussions on land-mines at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We must work to implement the decisions made at these conferences. We must work on finalizing the comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, and on furthering the disarmament process. At the same time, we must also begin working towards finding solutions to, and preventing, the new problems and challenges that we are facing in this ever-changing world. Rapid technological progress brings new hope for a better future but also puts dangerous power into the hands of some of the worst enemies of our civilization. We have to design new mechanisms that will enable us to face these new challenges and enable the United Nations to achieve new successes in the next 50 years.

On the basis of the experience of the past 50 years, we will have to examine the functioning of the United Nations system as a whole, to restructure some of its parts, and to assign new tasks to some of the others for the purpose of achieving the efficiency of the Organization as a whole. The United Nations must have as its vision a world that is more stable, politically and economically. The recent agreement between Israel and Palestine gives hope for lasting peace in the Middle East. We strongly support the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development and hope that, at this session, we will carry out this most important undertaking successfully.

Economic development is necessary for political and social stability. For many countries access to markets and the question of finances for development are of essential importance. We must also ensure that the United Nations shall continue to be financially viable. Each Member of the United Nations however large or small, has an obligation to do its share. We must also discuss the possible improvement of the work of the Security Council. To this end, my delegation fully supports the inclusion of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council.

At this session of the General Assembly, I can assure the President of the General Assembly that he will have the full support of the Macedonian delegation in bringing to a successful conclusion the many important issues we have on the agenda. I would like to take this opportunity to thank this General Assembly for giving us the important duty of presiding over the Second Committee. We attach particular significance to the economic issues that will be discussed there.

The Republic of Macedonia, despite difficult conditions, achieved its independence peacefully, without the use of force and with respect for all international norms. In a region so burdened by tragic wars, a region with violations of human rights, with a high degree of instability, we have pursued the path of our independence with a strong commitment to resolve all of our problems and conflicts peacefully, through dialogue, with good will, with readiness for cooperation with all of our neighbours and with all international organizations.

We are determined to contribute, within the framework of our capabilities, to the overcoming of all of the divisions and conflicts in the Balkans inherited from the past and to pursue the integration of our country into Europe as soon as possible, with respect for all of the European norms and standards of relations between countries as the only means to avoid repeating the tragic incidents of this region.

One of the basic principles of our foreign policy is that of equidistance in our relations with our neighbours, a readiness to establish equally good relations with all of our neighbours, based on mutual respect, the inviolability of borders, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and non-use of force.

Recently in this building, under the auspices of the United Nations, through the mediation of Cyrus Vance, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and Matthew Nimetz, Special Envoy of President Clinton, my country, the Republic of Macedonia, reached an accord with the Republic of Greece which regulates many aspects of relations between the two countries, and creates a basis for good-neighbourly cooperation. We believe that this accord will

contribute to increased stability in the Balkans and will have a positive influence on the future development of events in the region. We believe this accord is a good illustration of the positive role of the international community, and especially of the United Nations, in pursuing peaceful solutions in relations between States, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Republic of Macedonia, during its four years of independence, has faced many challenges. The economy of the whole region was deeply disturbed by the war to the north of us. As a result of the United Nations sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, the usual route to our traditional markets in Europe was cut off. The losses caused to our economy by the sanctions amount to over $4 billion. Since February 1994, we have also been under a unilateral trade embargo from the south. In the same period, we have undertaken a thorough transformation of our economy, turning it into a market-oriented economy, with all of the difficulties and risks that this transition brings. Despite all of this, we have succeeded in maintaining a high level of political, social and economic stability. We have built new democratic institutions with provisions for full protection of human rights and a political system in which all national minorities are recognized and enjoy full participation. We cannot claim that we have solved all of our problems. However, we have built the right mechanisms for solving them.

A great deal of attention has been given during this session of the General Assembly to United Nations peace-keeping operations. The enormous efforts of the United Nations in many peace-keeping operations have had varied results. Some of them have been more successful than others. Allow me to say a few words about the United Nations peace-keeping operation in the Republic of Macedonia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). It is a very successful operation and is fully achieving its goals. It has contributed tremendously to peace and stability in the southern Balkans and has built confidence among the people of the Republic of Macedonia in international organizations. This operation proves that preventive deployment is the most effective channel for United Nations peace-keeping efforts. This operation is the best example that results can be achieved even with a small, almost symbolic deployment of United Nations peace-keepers, if it is done at the right time and with a clear mandate. The full support the people of the Republic of Macedonia are giving this operation shows that the right decision was made by the Security Council when this peace-keeping operation was approved. This has been a very successful operation, and we hope it will serve as a model for many future activities of the United Nations; if so, I am confident that the same positive results will be achieved.

These days there is new hope that peace in Bosnia can be achieved. This tragic war has resulted in huge numbers of victims, a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe and massive destruction. We hope that the efforts of the international community will result in a solution which will respect the basic principles of the modern world. Bosnia should be preserved as an independent State within its internationally recognized borders. Provision must be made for full respect of human rights, and repetition of atrocities and war crimes must never be allowed.

We believe that as soon as peace is achieved it will be necessary to start the process of the reduction of arms in the Balkans, to start the process of a Balkan détente.

This year the General Assembly, under item 81 of its agenda, will consider the report of the Secretary-General on the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States, prepared on the basis of resolution 48/84 B, adopted at its forty-eighth session on the proposal of the Macedonian delegation. It is expected that special attention will be paid to measures and preventive activities aimed at the creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000.

The only way to achieve long-term peace and stability in the whole Balkan region is through the full integration of all the Balkan countries into Europe, with full respect for European standards and norms. The independence, territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of all Balkan countries must be respected. Problems of national minorities that have been at the root of many conflicts in the Balkans throughout its history should be addressed. All national minorities should be recognized and their basic human rights fully respected. It is our duty to work for peace and the democratic development of the whole Balkan region now, and not to leave burdens of the past to future generations.

Just as we must work for the stabilization of the Balkan region as a whole, we must also recognize the uniqueness of each of the countries of the region. The problems are not identical, and therefore the solutions cannot be identical. There are a lot of discussions about the problems of former Yugoslavia. It is very important

to understand that there is no such entity as "former Yugoslavia". There are a number of new countries in this area, each with their own set of problems and prospects, and there is no way to find a unified solution for these problems. Each country must be treated individually.

The hope and desire for a better world were the foundations for the United Nations 50 years ago. At this session of the General Assembly, it is our duty to lay the groundwork for the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. We should all work together towards a safer world and to reduce the fears and threats of the future as much as possible.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyzstan, Mrs. Rosa Otunbayeva.

Mrs. Otunbayeva (Kyrgyzstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of my country, I would like to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the lofty post of President of the fiftieth, anniversary session of the United Nations General Assembly. We would also like to express our deep gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who is at the head of our Organization at this momentous time, for his tireless efforts to strengthen peace and security around the world.

The fireworks commemorating victory in the Second World War still resounded when our Organization was coming into being, but the world had already been divided by military and ideological confrontation. In the Soviet Union, Ministries of Foreign Affairs were founded in each of the republics and hastily staffed with diplomatic personnel. However, the Soviet Union's attempts to use its republics to increase the number of votes in its bloc within the newly formed international Organization were not successful. Only three out of the 15 republics were accepted as Members of the United Nations. Frozen by the years of the cold war, we gained our independence without any violence or bloodshed. Now, almost half a century later, we have entered into the community of fully-fledged Members of the United Nations.

Since then, the world has gone through dramatic changes. Today we need the United Nations as never before.

Through the United Nations, we, the post-socialist countries, enter into the world and interact with countries of the North and the South, the West and the East. Within only four years of attaining independence, Kyrgyzstan has become a Member of the United Nations and has joined the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), as well as many other international political and financial organizations. The United Nations represents the main axis of the foreign policy of our young country, and we will work without respite to increase the effectiveness of our Organization.

As small countries, we see in the United Nations a guarantor of our independence, security and justice, based on mutual respect for international law. The law is our strongest argument in the family of the United Nations.

As countries with economies in transition and as developing democracies, we receive extremely important and urgent aid and support from the United Nations: medicine, food and technical equipment. The Gramin Bank is fighting rising poverty by giving the people microloans. We are trying to build a civil society by educating the non-governmental organizations, lawyers and journalists. On 24 December 1995, open presidential elections will take place in Kyrgyzstan, to which we would like to invite observers from all over the world.

One of our most significant achievements during our first years of independence, as our President, Askar Akayev, has pointed out, is — in addition to our small economic advances on the road to a free market — the attainment of an inter-ethnic consensus, internal stability and peace in our country.

Hidden tensions based on religious and ethnic grounds erupted in Central Asia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, requiring the involvement of the United Nations, the OSCE and the CIS. We commend the mediating role of the United Nations, which led to a cease-fire agreement and the beginning of a dialogue between the sides in the inter-Tajik conflict. The five countries of Central Asia, along with the Russian Federation, are doing their best to launch the fifth round of talks on the conflict in Tajikistan. These should lead to a dialogue regarding fundamental issues pertaining to the political future of the country.

Actions taken by the organs of the United Nations system, the donor countries and international financial institutions should range from humanitarian assistance to

long-term development programmes. This is true for both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. I strongly support the proposal by the Secretary of State of the United Kingdom, Mr. Malcolm Rifkind, for the establishment within the United Nations of special programmes for stabilization and transition.

It is a sign of the times that, in the face of horrible and prolonged conflicts, all the major countries, for the first time in half a century, have joined together to build and keep the peace.

Step by step, the knot in the Middle East is being untied. We would like to congratulate Israel and Palestine on the recent signing of an agreement on the West Bank, and we hope that both parties will have patience, courage and success on this difficult road to peace. There are promising hopes for a settlement to be reached that will end the conflict in Bosnia. Kyrgyzstan welcomes the peace talks based on the Washington Agreements on the creation of a State based on the federal principle. We are convinced that the time has come to focus the world's attention on the situation in Afghanistan. There can be no peace in Asia without the settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan.

It is impossible to be a mere spectator when the flames of wars and conflicts scorch our borders and decrease stability. Kazakstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have announced their willingness to create a peace-keeping unit under the auspices of the United Nations. We are convinced of the need to have such United Nations operational peace-keeping forces in reserve, so they can be called upon in extreme situations.

There remains an undiscovered potential when it comes to cooperation among the United Nations and the OSCE, the United Nations and the CIS, and all of them together when it comes to solving conflicts in post-Soviet territory. It is not by competing but by cooperating that the regional security institutions can stop the violence and explosions. They can use a wide spectrum of preventive measures, such as "planting" the culture of peace, bringing the sides to the negotiating table and constant monitoring.

Border issues, the distribution of water and natural resources, the rights of ethnic minorities: we in Central Asia need international legal expertise in all these areas, as well as the introduction of proven legal, political, socio-economic norms and regulations.

Fully sharing the responsibility for peace and security in our region, the newly independent States of Central Asia are trying to do all they can to keep peace and order on the land given to us by God. Kazakstan is working with persistence to organize a conference on confidence-building measures in Asia. Uzbekistan is working on the idea of a standing seminar on the subject of regional security. Turkmenistan declared its intention to become a neutral State. During a meeting in May of this year at Lake Issyk-Kul, representatives of the five countries, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), created a standing seminar on stable development for Central Asia.

Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian countries supported with great enthusiasm the unconditional and indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty at the 1995 Conference on that Treaty. Along with Uzbekistan, my country calls for establishing Central Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It is our firm wish to finalize work on the agreement on a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than 1996 and to make the moratorium on nuclear testing universal and permanent.

Free economic and trade zones have become efficient instruments in speeding up trade and development among countries and continents. To make the world a safer place, we need other types of zones: not just non-nuclear but "non-conflict" zones. Central Asia could become such a testing ground.

The lessons of the last decade require focused and compassionate attention from the United Nations and the world community in general on countries in transition such as Kyrgyzstan. The United Nations and its organizations — UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) — although sometimes overwhelmed by the unprecedented nature and scope of problems such as those of refugees, natural disasters, degradation of the environment, illegal drug trafficking and the spread of AIDS, deserve a great deal of credit for helping us to solve severe social problems in this difficult transition period. It is not only professional office managers who work there, but true implementators of reforms. World forums of the United Nations — from Cairo to Copenhagen, from Beijing to the Habitat II Conference scheduled to be held in Istanbul — bind us together in the United Nations in understanding the magnitude of the social problems confronting humanity. Implementing their decisions will require enthusiasm and a huge concentration of effort. The most important thing

now is action — the political will of Member States to go forward— effective international monitoring and "glasnost".

The participation of women in all these transformations is of critical importance. The world in the twenty-first century means equal rights for men and women, for my son and my daughter, my daughter and millions of other young girls and women in Central Asia, to be married in accordance with their own choice and desires, to have unrestricted access to education and employment, to be elected to Parliament and to work at all levels of government. It is for the sake of these goals that I am tirelessly working today.

We welcome the intention and determination of the President for this session, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, personally to lead the activities of a High-level Open-ended Working Group to report on the subject of reform to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We, the Member States of the United Nations, expect not only thorough and precise reports, but seek concrete, genuine reforms and changes.

Kyrgyzstan favours an enlargement of the Security Council, while bearing in mind the need for appropriate regional balance. Germany and Japan, in our view, deserve to be elected to the Council as permanent members. Being among the biggest contributors to the United Nations budget, they are playing an ever-increasing role in strengthening peace and promoting development and democracy. It is also necessary to increase the number of non-permanent Security Council members.

The world at the end of the twentieth century is as complicated and multi-faceted as we are — peoples and countries on six continents who are burdened with their daily problems and worries, their dreams and concerns. Modern means of communication and speed have encouraged humankind to feel more united on an unprotected Earth. It is likely that no one would have tried to rule the world if it were a single voting district.

The United Nations, empowered by its 185 Member States with a clear understanding of its responsibility, is wisely and competently leading us to the new millennium. My country is going forward consciously and confidently under the United Nations banner with a hope for a better future.

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind Members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Abolhassani Shahreza (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today we all listened to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, who once again laid claims against the territorial integrity of my country that have no basis in history or in international law.

The position of my Government is clear and needs no reiteration in detail. We categorically reject these claims. Therefore, I will confine myself to making a few brief remarks.

First, the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully committed to its international obligations, especially those arising from the Agreement of 1971. We firmly believe that misunderstandings over the interpretation or implementation of that Agreement, if any, should be addressed with good will and through mutually-agreed mechanisms in order to find an amicable solution.

We thus oppose any measure that might cause instability in the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf and thus adversely affect the interests of all countries in the region. For its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to respect and maintain peace, security and tranquillity in the region.

Secondly, the appropriate and practical step to remove misunderstandings between nations is direct negotiations between the parties concerned, a process which allows all those directly concerned to show flexibility and to manage the whole mechanism of settlement by themselves.

On the basis of this principle, my Government remains prepared to take up the misunderstandings over the island of Abu Moosa directly with officials of the United Arab Emirates and stands ready to enter into negotiations without preconditions. We have shown our good will by dispatching two high-level delegations, including our Foreign Minister, to the United Arab Emirates to resolve these misunderstandings.

Unfortunately, our brothers in the United Arab Emirates have failed to come to Tehran for a continuation of high-level talks, despite their prior agreement to do so. They have a standing invitation to bilateral talks in Tehran aimed at resolving the issue in a friendly and neighbourly atmosphere. We have consistently underlined the efficiency of this mechanism, and do not really see any genuine utility in the public exercise of this issue in international forums, including the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Thirdly, what we need in the Persian Gulf region is peace, tranquillity, stability, good-neighbourly relations, understanding and fraternal sincerity and honesty. Our region, unfortunately, has witnessed two destructive wars and many skirmishes, and is still paying the price to mitigate the consequences of those wars and miscalculations.

Fortunately, we have a history of cordial relations with the United Arab Emirates, and we are confident that wisdom and prudence will ultimately prevail. We are determined to maintain and promote brotherly and good-neighbourly relations between our two countries.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): It was with great dismay that my delegation heard the intervention of the representative of Afghanistan earlier this afternoon.

Pakistan, as is well known, has all along supported the Afghan cause, expressed its solidarity with the Afghans and has made tremendous sacrifices for the people of Afghanistan.

Events in Afghanistan after the end of foreign occupation have obviously been a source of deep disappointment to us. Pakistan has been following a policy of strict neutrality and non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. We have no favourites in Afghanistan and, therefore, have no preference for one group over another in the intra-Afghan rivalries. We believe that the solution to the Afghan problem has to emerge from the Afghans themselves.

Being an immediate neighbour, Pakistan does, however, have a vested interest in peace and stability in Afghanistan; only that would enable the 1.6 million Afghan refugees still in Pakistan to return to their homes. That is why we have whole-heartedly supported the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Pakistan is also ready to assist the brotherly Afghan parties, in any way possible, to arrive at a peaceful and durable political solution that could bring an end to the ongoing fratricidal conflict.

The allegation that Pakistan is interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs is totally baseless and unwarranted. Pakistan does not support any one group against any other. The Talibans' take-over of Herat without a single shot being fired and without any bloodshed was reflective of the Afghan people's disenchantment with the continuous violence in Afghanistan and with the regime in Kabul. The Afghan representative's attempt now to blame Pakistan for Kabul's failure in Herat and elsewhere is only meant to cover up the internal political difficulties being faced by a Government that no longer has support or legitimacy.

Reference has been made to the dastardly attack on and burning down of the Pakistan embassy in Kabul about four weeks ago — on 6 September 1995 — by a mob of 3,000 persons, instigated and led by the Kabul authorities. The embassy was burnt down, one staff member was killed, and others, including the Ambassador and the Defence Attaché, received serious wounds. The attack took place despite the warning we had communicated to the Afghan Government a day before the incident.

There is ample evidence to suggest that the attack against the Pakistani diplomatic mission was aided, abetted and, in fact, executed by the Kabul authorities themselves. This was a gross violation of the norms of diplomatic behaviour, and it runs contrary to the Geneva Convention of 1961. It deserves outright condemnation by all. All Afghan leaders other than the regime in Kabul have condemned it — and rightly so. That is why the statement of Afghanistan's Acting Defence Minister, Mr. Yunnus Qanuni, that the Kabul authorities had nothing to apologize for in respect of this incident is extremely deplorable and runs totally contrary to the traditional and fraternal ties between the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Afghan representative's statement today and the wild allegations it contains represent the irrational actions of a regime that is desperately trying to cling to power despite being disowned by its own population. Today it controls no more than 5 out of 32 provinces, and even the capital is being progressively surrounded by Afghans who no longer accept this Government. It is obvious, therefore, that the authorities in Kabul no longer enjoy the confidence of the people of Afghanistan and no

longer have the legitimacy that can come only from the support of the population.

Let me remind the Assembly that, according to the Islamabad Accord entered into by the political parties in Afghanistan, the tenure of Professor Rabbani was to come to an end in June 1994. That commitment was not met, and the regime in Kabul had its rule extended by questionable means for another six months, up to December 1994. Even then the handing over of power did not take place. Professor Rabbani then informed the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Mestiri, that he would hand over power on 21 March 1995. That did not happen — yet again, for the third time round.

Ambassador Mestiri, in his address to the donors' briefing conference in Stockholm on 2 June 1995, said:

> "General Masoud, Professor Rabbani and others associated with them have been arguing that by pushing the Taliban out of Kabul they had achieved victory all over Afghanistan."

The reality is that the base of the Government has become narrower and could be said to represent only the Tajik ethnic group. The Pushtuns, Uzbeks and Hazaras have been alienated. These three ethnic groups, combined, represent about 60 per cent of the population of Afghanistan.

The frank and candid assessment by the Secretary-General's representative clearly enunciates the facts regarding the legitimacy of the Kabul regime. The attempt now to implicate Pakistan is clearly designed to divert the attention of the people of Afghanistan from the core issue — the transfer of power. It is interesting to note that only the Kabul regime is making these strange accusations. None of all the other groups and parties in Afghanistan has made any such allegations. One can wonder why.

The truth is that the regime in Kabul no longer has legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan population. We can only suggest that the quicker the regime in Kabul acknowledges the loss of popular support and hands over power, the quicker peace will return to that war-torn country.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to comment on the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the Iranian occupation of three Arab islands — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Moussa — which were part of the United Arab Emirates but were occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1971. My delegation regrets Iran's repeated refusal of all the Emirates' peace initiatives which called upon the parties to resort to bilateral negotiations or to have recourse to the International Court of Justice in order to settle the dispute.

Since the very beginning of Iran's occupation of the three islands, the United Arab Emirates has continued to voice its rejection of that occupation and to call for putting an end to it in the interests of good-neighbourliness and confidence-building between the two countries, in consonance with the decisions and resolutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the principles of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law. Despite this peaceful approach, the Islamic Republic of Iran persists in adopting measures that aim at entrenching its military and civilian occupation of the three islands.

More disappointing still is Iran's persistence in trying to divert all efforts towards side issues that have nothing whatsoever to do with the issue of putting an end to its occupation. The aim, of course, is to impose a *fait accompli* policy that flies in the face of the international community, which does not accept the occupation of the territory of others by force.

By the same token we should like to reaffirm that, under the established rules of international law, Iran's occupation of the three islands does not in any way change their legal status and, no matter how long it may last, it will not give the occupying Power any jurisdiction or confer upon it any sovereignty. The facts on the ground and the constants of history which are amply documented under our hand rebut the illegal claims of the Iranian Government.

Since 1929, Iran has tried, time and again, to purchase or to lease those islands from the Government of the United Arab Emirates. This, by itself, refutes Iran's claims. We, therefore, must ask ourselves how could the three islands be Iranian when the Government of Iran, following the failure by Iran to purchase or lease them, resorted to occupation and the killing and expulsion of their indigenous population in 1971.

The polices of hegemony and the use of or threat of force pursued by certain States to secure certain regional gains at the expense of neighbouring countries no longer has a place in the context of the international order that

upholds the principles of mutual respect between States and of non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, irrespective of the size of any State's territory or density of population.

In conclusion, we hope that the Government of Iran will review its unacceptable policies which have been in place for over 23 years now, and respond to the peace initiatives put forward by my country, with the aim of engaging in unconditional bilateral negotiations or of having recourse to the International Court of Justice in order to reach a just settlement to the dispute, to return the islands to their rightful owners and, thereby, to re-establish peace and justice in the region.

Mr. Osmani (Afghanistan): In relation to the comments made by Pakistan, my delegation wishes to reserve its right to make a statement in right of reply at a subsequent meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.